

From the President's Desk: 2015 Updates and a Look Forward

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These past few months have been a whirlwind for LUGPA, as we've expanded our membership in communities across the country and achieved policy success in Washington, DC.

In only our eighth year, LUGPA has shown unparalleled growth and success. LUGPA has consistently championed value-based medicine in independent urology, earning national recognition for our multidisciplinary efforts, ranging from practice administration support to data integration to health policy. Looking toward the coming years, we have an even more ambitious agenda.

Recently, LUGPA members from across the country rallied and exerted a significant and recognized impact on the successful effort to repeal the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) Medicare reimbursement system. Passing SGR reform did not simply represent a victory in the long-standing need to stabilize fee-for-service Medicare payments—in the future, physician reimbursement will be increasingly tied to outcome measures and value, an environment in which LUGPA groups by their very nature as integrated independent practices are well positioned to thrive. Accordingly, SGR reform has provided LUGPA groups increased opportunity to succeed over the long haul.

LUGPA has also recently expanded membership eligibility for groups of independent urologists. Originally, LUGPA had limited its membership to large groups, defined as 10 or more physician colleagues. In 2014, we broadened membership eligibility to include independent practices of five or more physicians, as we saw that in many markets these smaller independent practices have a meaningful impact in their communities.

Although LUGPA already represents approximately 25% of the nation's urologists, providing approximately 30% of the urologic care in the communities in which they serve, expanding our outreach to smaller practices will help to further increase LUGPA's impact on healthcare policy at the local, state, and national levels. One of the main pillars of LUGPA is its avid defense of a patient's right to seek comprehensive, cost-effective treatment through high-quality care delivered in the independent practice setting. With continued collaboration among LUGPA members, various physician associations, and patient advocacy groups, LUGPA will continue to work for the protection and advancement of independent medicine.

As LUGPA's membership has grown, the content and attendance of the annual meeting has increased dramatically. As a result, LUGPA leadership has

recognized the need to establish regional membership meetings in order to offer members additional opportunities for networking. In 2015, regional LUGPA meetings have been, or will be, held in Florida, Oregon, and New York, and members can expect at least three coordinated regional meeting options in the spring of 2016 from which to choose. These meetings will be held at hotels in conveniently located airport hubs to facilitate the logistics and efficiency of attendance.

In addition to our vigorous advocacy efforts to protect the independent practice of urology, LUGPA has been nationally recognized for its emphasis on member value. Major LUGPA website renovations are underway in order to streamline communications and develop an online forum for dialogue between members. The first phase of updates includes mobile optimization to ensure members have access to the website and its resources on their mobile phones and tablets. This phase also includes a new *Action Center*, which links to an *Email-Your-Legislator* tool with template letters that members can customize. The tool will allow members to contact their representative or senator with unprecedented ease

by simply entering their home state and district into the drop-down menu. We're also renovating the *Practice Management Corner*. This section of the website will allow practice managers from across the country to connect and dialogue with one another. In the future, additional capabilities will be added to the website.

In addition to website renovation, LUGPA continues to distribute timely e-blasts with updates on policy, meetings, and the activities of LUGPA. Weekly media monitors are also distributed, which share relevant LUGPA and healthcare policy news regarding healthcare costs, Medicare, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, the Physician Payments Sunshine Act, and additional legislative and health policy developments.

Other major LUGPA projects continue to progress. These include our Data Integration Project, in which over 700 urologists are now registered. This project will provide groups with robust practice management benchmarking data—the most extensive practice management benchmarking opportunity in the history of urology—free of charge to participating LUGPA members.

Our Prostate Cancer Active Surveillance Project is also revolutionary. We have demonstrated that integrated LUGPA groups have adopted active surveillance enthusiastically and appropriately. Our active surveillance incidence data were reported at the 2015 American Urological Association Annual Meeting, and the project was selected as sufficiently impactful that it was one of the reports specifically highlighted to the media at that meeting.

This year, we had a particularly exciting LUGPA Forum, as we were fortunate to host Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal as our guest speaker. Governor Jindal is a leading voice among an emerging cadre of young leaders in the Republican Party, and his insight regarding the future of healthcare in America is particularly relevant.

LUGPA's success over the years has only been possible through the support and participation of our members. As we enter the second half of 2015, we look forward to building on our momentum with services that strengthen integrated urology practices, and welcoming new members to LUGPA.

As always, do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns. ■